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<u>Amendments to the Claims:</u>

1. (Original) A method of offering items for sale in a group, comprising:

(1) defining an affinity space coordinate for each of plural items available for sale;

(2) creating a package template including at least one mandatory element schema having an associated affinity space description;

(3) comparing, with a computer, the affinity space coordinate for each of the plural items with the affinity space description associated with the package template; and

(4) if the comparison step reveals a match, presenting for sale a package that is defined at least in part by the package template and includes at least one item with a matching affinity space description.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the presenting step is performed by dynamically generating an html page containing a description of the package, and transmitting the html page over a decentralized computer network to at least one consumer.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including eliciting at least one constraint from a consumer, and selecting or rejecting the package template based at least in part on the elicited consumer constraint.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the elicited constraint includes customer mood.

5. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the elicited constraint includes number of persons traveling.

6. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the elicited constraint includes a timing constraint.

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7.   (Original) The method of claim 1 further including storing a description of each of the plural items, including said associated affinity space coordinates in a computer database, and wherein the comparing step includes searching the computer database for items having affinity coordinates matching the affinity space description associated with the package template.

8.   (Original) The method of claim 1 further including maintaining a hash table of the items keyed by affinity space coordinate, and wherein the comparing step includes performing a hash table lookup for each required affinity space description.

9.   (Original) The method of claim 1 further including permitted a consumer to purchase the package by transmitting a further message of the digital communications network.

10.   (Original) The method of claim 9 further including confirming the consumer's purchase of the package by transmitting a further message of the digital communications network.

11.   (Original) A computer system for offering items for sale in a group, comprising:
            a data arrangement that stores at least a description of each of plural items available for sale, said description including an affinity space coordinate, the data arrangement also storing at least one package template including at least one mandatory element schema having an associated affinity space description;
            a comparator coupled to the data arrangement, the comparator comparing the affinity space coordinate for each of the plural items with the affinity space description associated with the package template; and
            a user interface arrangement coupled to the comparator, the user interface presenting for sale a package that is defined at least in part by the package template and includes at least one item with a matching affinity space description.

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12.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1-11 wherein the user interface arrangement includes a page generator that dynamically generating generates an html page containing a description of the package, and transmits the html page over a decentralized computer network to at least one consumer web browsing appliance.

13.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1-11 wherein the user interface arrangement also elicits at least one constraint from a consumer, and selects or rejects the package template based at least in part on the elicited consumer constraint.

14.   (Original) The system of claim 13 wherein the elicited constraint includes customer mood.

15.   (Original) The system of claim 13 wherein the elicited constraint includes number of persons travelling.

16.   (Original) The system of claim 13 wherein the elicited constraint includes a timing constraint.

17.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1- 11 wherein the comparator includes a database engine that searches the computer database for items having affinity coordinates matching the affinity space description associated with the package template.

18.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1- 11 further including a hash table of the plural items keyed by affinity space coordinate, and wherein the comparator performs a hash table lookup for each required affinity space description.

19.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1- 11 further including a purchase transactor that permits a consumer to purchase the package by transmitting at least one message over a digital communications network.

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20.   (Original) The system of claim 19 further including a confirmation section that confirms the consumer's purchase of the package by transmitting a further message of the digital communications network.

21.   (Original) A method of offering travel arrangements over a decentralized computer network to a consumer using a web browsing appliance, the method comprising:

(a)   storing descriptions of available travel components in a database;

(b)   storing at least one travel package template;

(c)   eliciting at least one constraint from a consumer;

(d)   dynamically generating at least one travel package based on the elicited consumer constraint, at least one travel package template, and at least one stored available travel component description; and

(e)   offering the generated travel package to the consumer by transmitting a description of the generated travel package over the decentralized computer network to the consumer's web browsing appliance.

22.   (Original) The method of claim 21 further including receiving a consumer purchase request over the network, and performing a purchasing transaction to purchase the at least one stored available travel component.

23.   (Original) The method of claim 21 further including using a screen-scraping technique to obtain said available travel component descriptions.

24.   (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein the travel component description includes an affinity space coordinate.

25.   (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein the travel package template includes at least one mandatory element schema. having an associated affinity space description.

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26.   (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein the generating step includes comparing, with a computer, a affinity space coordinate for each of the trave components with a affinity space description associated with the package template.

27.   (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein the available trav el components each expire within a short time period.

28.   (Original) A computer system for offering travel arrangements over a decentralized computer network to a consumer using a web browsing appliance, comprising:

     a data storage arrangement that stores descriptions of available travel components and at least one travel package template;

     a user interface element coupled to the network, the user interface element eliciting at least one constraint from a consumer; and

     an package engine that dynamically generates at least one travel package based on the elicited consumer constraint, at least one travel package template, and at least one stored available travel component description, and offers the generated travel package to the consumer by transmitting a description of the generated travel package over the decentralized computer network to the consumer's web browsing appliance.

29.   (Original) A method of dynamically creating packages comprising:

(a)   receiving a request based on a link from a web site;

(b)   ascertaining at least one customer constraint;

(c)   dynamically generating at least one package based on the elicited consumer constraint, at least one package template, and at least one stored available component description, and

(d)   offering the generated package to the consumer by transmitting a description of the generated package over a decentralized computer network.

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30.   (Original) The method of claim 29 wherein the component comprises a last-minute travel component, and the web site offers at least travel related services.

31.   (Original) The method of claim 29 wherein the dynamically generating step is performed by the web site.

32.   (Previously Presented) A method for building packages of components and offering said packages for sale over a data communications network, said method comprising:
    storing descriptions of available components within a computer data storage arrangement;
    providing at least one package template;
    using a computer coupled to the computer data storage arrangement to dynamically generate at least one package based at least in part on said package template and at least one stored available component description; and
    offering said package for sale to a consumer over said data communications network.

33.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 wherein said package template describes a travel package, and said components comprise travel components.

34.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 wherein said components describe attributes and/or qualities.

35.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 wherein said components describe an affinity space coordinate.

36.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 wherein said package template includes at least one mandatory component schema and at least one optional component schema.

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37.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 wherein said package template further includes a affinity space subset description.

38.   (Previously Presented) The method of clam 32 wherein said method dynamically generates said package further based on at least one elicited consumer constraint.

39.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 further comprising requiring a human to approve said package before offering it for sale.

40.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 further including confirming availability of said package at the time of consumer selection thereof before completing a sales transaction.

41.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 wherein at least said offering step comprises offering said package for sale via a web-based interface.

42.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 wherein said providing step comprises the step of a human creating said package template describing a package of components a consumer might wish to purchase.

43.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42 wherein said package template includes a mandatory airline ticket and hotel and at least one optional element.

44.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 further including eliciting at least one consumer constraint through the consumer navigating screens of a web site, and using said constraint to select a package to offer the consumer.

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45.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 further including selecting a subset of created package templates meeting consumer constraints.

46.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 wherein said package template comprises a package description including at least one of text, images and animations.

47.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 32 wherein said package template includes a~~vector of package element~~ at least one component schemata.

48.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 wherein said package template includes at least one field stating whether a component is mandatory or optional.

49.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 further including automatically returning possible combinations of components stored in the data storage arrangement for human selection.

50.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 further including adding incentive characteristics to a package.

51.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50 wherein said adding step includes adding at least one of a default margin, a coupon and a rebate.

52.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 further including obtaining at least one available component by using a screen scraping process.

53.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 further including obtaining at least one component by accessing a computer reservation service.

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54.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 further including obtaining at least one component by accessing a supplier database.

55.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 further including obtaining at least one component by accessing an EDI interface.

56.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 further including obtaining at least one component via an email interface.

57.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 further including obtaining at least one component via an HTML supplier interface.

58.   (Previously Presented) A method of using a computer to develop and offer packages for sale comprising:
        describing attributes and/or qualities of plural items;
        creating package schema including mandatory element schema and optional element schema;
        for each mandatory element schema in a selected package schema. determining which item(s) fit to develop a candidate package;
        presenting at least one candidate package for human approval and selection; and
        conditioned on selection of said candidate package, confirming availability of items within said package before completing a sales transaction for said package.

59.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 wherein sa d package schema comprises at least one affinity coordinate.

60.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 wherein at least some of said items comprise travel items.

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61.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 wherein at least some of said items comprise airline reservations.

62.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 wherein at least some of said items comprise hotel reservations.

63.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 further including presenting said package for sale over the Internet using a web-based interface and a browser.

64.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 wherein said items comprise consumer electronics items.

65.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 wherein at east some of said items comprise gifts.

66.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 wherein at east some of said items comprise products and other of said items comprise services.

67.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 wherein at east some of said items comprise legal services.

68.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 wherein at least some of said items comprise real estate brokerage services.

69.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 wherein at least some of said items comprise mortgage brokerage services.

70.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 wherein at least some of said items comprise appliances.

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71.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58 wherein at least some of said items comprise home renovation services.

72.   (Previously Presented) A package schema data structure comprising:

at least one field stating whether an element is mandatory or optional;

a list of required attributes; and

at least one coordinate defining matching criteria,

wherein said package schema data structure is used to dynamically develop at least one package of plural elements to be offered for sale over the Internet via a web interface.

73.   (Previously Presented) A dynamic package sales system comprising:

a backend interface that gathers package components from plural suppliers and stores said components within a computer database;

an operator interface that allows operators to develop package models defining mandatory and optional package components;

a matching engine that matches components within said database with package models to develop complete packages; and

a web-based package offering interface coupled to said engine and to said database, said offering interface offering said packages for sale over the Internet and allowing consumers to select and purchase said packages,

wherein said offering interface confirms availability of package components within said database before completing a purchasing transaction for packages.

74.   (Previously Presented) A dynamic package sales method comprising:

gathering descriptions of package components from plural suppliers;

storing said component descriptions within a computer database;

operating an interface that allows operators to develop package models including mandatory components and optional components;

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matching components within said database with package models to develop complete packages; and

offering said packages for sale over the Internet and allowing consumers to select and purchase said packages,

wherein said offering step includes confirming availability of package components within said database before completing a purchasing transaction for packages.